

THE IDENTITY OF TWO *FICEDULA* FLYCATCHERS RECENTLY COLLECTED IN KENYA Britton (1980a) has pointed out that there appears to be no entirely satisfactory record of the Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* for East Africa. Confusion has arisen in the past because of the close similarity of this species to the Collared Flycatcher *F. albicollis*, and in particular its eastern race *semitorquata*. Some authors (e.g. Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1960) have actually regarded *semitorquata* as a race of *hypoleuca* rather than of *albicollis*, while others (e.g. Voous 1977) have accorded *semitorquata* specific rank.

Individuals recently claimed in East Africa as *hypoleuca* have included adult males seen in the field and adult female/first year birds examined in the hand. From the descriptions available, all these birds could well have been *semitorquata*.

I have been able to examine two Kenya specimens in the National Museum, Nairobi, collection which were originally assigned to *hypoleuca*. Both are first year birds, one collected at Kakamega on 24 December 1970 and the other at 2550 m on Mt Elgon on 16 January 1976. I have compared these two birds with a Nairobi Museum specimen of nominate *albicollis*, a first year bird identifiable by the white bases of the hindneck feathers, which was collected at Ng'iya on 2 October 1972. I have also compared all these Nairobi Museum birds with a series of *hypoleuca*, nominate *albicollis* and *semitorquata* in the British Museum (Natural History) study collections at Tring.

Adult male *semitorquata* is readily distinguishable from *hypoleuca* by the greater amount of white in the wing, including a more extensive 'speculum', formed by the bases of the inner primaries, and an additional narrow bar formed by the tips of the median coverts (see, for example, Svensson 1975). It is typically much blacker above than *hypoleuca* and often shows a white half collar and a greyish rump; with good views these characters can be seen in the field. Adult female and first winter *semitorquata* resemble nominate *albicollis* in colour, being grey-brown above rather than the olive-brown colour of *hypoleuca*. Like nominate *albicollis*, they also show more white in the wing than female/first winter *hypoleuca*, with a broad bar formed by the greater covert tips and secondary bases, broad white tertial edges, and a small visible speculum formed by the bases of the inner primaries, which is typically hidden by the primary coverts in female/first winter *hypoleuca*.

In the hand, wing formula would also appear to be a useful character in many birds. I noted the position of the second primary tip relative to that of the fifth in British Museum specimens, and numbers of birds in various categories were as follows:

	P2 < P5	P2 = P5	P2 > P5
<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	46	4	1
<i>Ficedula a. albicollis</i>	3	11	36
<i>Ficedula a. semitorquata</i>	5	19	20

In *hypoleuca*, the second primary was typically 2-3 mm shorter than the fifth, and only in *albicollis* (both races) was it commonly longer, or even equal.

The Nairobi Museum birds from Kakamega and Mt Elgon match specimens of *albicollis* as regards colour of upperparts, being paler and greyer than any *hypoleuca* examined. One, the Elgon bird, had as much white in the wing as the Nairobi Museum Ng'iya *albicollis*, and both had a small visible speculum in the primary bases extending back to about level with the primary tips. The Elgon bird, like the one from Ng'iya, had the second primary equal to the fifth; in the Kakamega bird it was marginally (<1 mm) shorter.

Thus, judging mainly by the colour of the upperparts, but also taking into account the visible primary speculum, the amount of white in the wing generally, and the length of the second primary, I would assign both the Kakamega and Elgon specimens to *semitorquata*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to I.C.J. Galbraith for facilities afforded me at the British Museum (Natural History) and to G.R. Cunningham-van Someren for the loan of material from the National Museum, Nairobi.

REFERENCES

- BRITTON, P.L. 1980a. *Ficedula* flycatchers in East Africa. *Scopus* 4: 21-22.
- SVENSSON, L. 1975. *Identification guide to European Passerines*. Stockholm: Naturhistoriska Riksmuseet.
- VOOUS, K.H. 1977. List of recent Holarctic bird species. *Ibis* 119: 223-250.
- D.J. Pearson, Department of Biochemistry, Box 30197, Nairobi.
- Scopus* 5: 59-60, June 1981

Received 10 March 1981

A RECORD OF THE COLLARED FLYCATCHER *FICEDULA ALBICOLLIS* FROM NAIROBI Britton (1980a) summarizes the status of *Ficedula* flycatchers in East Africa. For Kenya, the only definite records of the Collared Flycatcher are of an adult male at Mara River on 3 March 1973, referable to the eastern race *semitorquata*, a female/first winter male at Ng'iya on 2 October 1972 and the Kakamega and Mt Elgon birds assigned to *semitorquata* by Pearson (1981). A number of other *Ficedula* records from Kakamega Forest, Mt Elgon, Mau Narok and Nairobi are indeterminate (Britton 1980a).

At noon on 16 November 1980 I located a female/first autumn male *Ficedula* around tall trees in my garden in Spring Valley, Nairobi. There had been heavy rain in the night and several other Palaearctic migrants were also visible. The *Ficedula* was intermittently in view for 30 min as it flitted about in typical flycatcher fashion in the open tree canopy. It also climbed on slanting trunks like a treecreeper *Certhia* sp., and twice chased off and mobbed single Red-eyed Doves *Streptopelia semitorquata*. It was watched through 10 × 40 binoculars, in good light, at ranges between 30 and 50 m.

The upperparts were unmarked grey-brown, with a definite paler grey patch on the rump visible in direct sunlight. There was no hint of a paler collar, and no white on the frons. The closed wing was dark brown or blackish, with a broad white bar in the region of the greater covert tips and prominent white edges to the tertials. The dorsal tail surface was also dark brown or blackish. The eyes, legs and bill were dark. The chin and throat were whitish above a very pale greyish breast that merged via very diffuse streaks to an unmarked white belly and vent. The bird was silent.

In view of the grey tone to the upperparts, the pale rump and the large amount of white in the wing, I identified the bird as a Collared Flycatcher rather than a Pied *F. hypoleuca*. The absence of any visible pale neck collar despite the excellent views obtained would suggest that the bird was of the eastern race *semitorquata*.

REFERENCES

- BRITTON, P.L. 1980a. *Ficedula* flycatchers in East Africa. *Scopus* 4: 21-22.
- PEARSON, D.J. 1981. The identity of two *Ficedula* flycatchers recently collected in Kenya. *Scopus* 5: 59-60.

Adrian D. Lewis, Department of Geology, Box 30197, Nairobi

Scopus 5: 60

Received 10 March 1981